

VOLUME 6  
NUMBER 22

# THE KIRTLAND AFB NUCLEUS

FRIDAY • JUNE 4, 2004  
ALBUQUERQUE • NEW MEXICO  
Nucleus online: [www.kirtland.af.mil](http://www.kirtland.af.mil)



## Memorial Day 2004

Master Sgt. Tim Uding, 377th Security Forces Squadron, leads a parade of state flags carried by volunteers from the 377th Air Base Wing and the 58th Special Operations Wing on Memorial Day at the New Mexico Veterans' Memorial Park on Louisiana Boulevard. See more Memorial Day photos on Pages 12-13.

Photo by Dennis Carlson

# Air Force approves force shaping Phase II

**WASHINGTON (AFPN)**—As personnel officials review the last remaining applications for retirement or separation under the force-shaping program, a more extensive second phase of the plan has begun.

The new initiatives include expanded waivers for a number of programs including active-duty service commitments and transferring to the Guard or Reserve through the Palace Chase program. It also includes a few new ones, most notably the return of the career job reservation program. The CJR program limits re-enlistments into the career force by constraining Air Force specialties for some first-term Airmen, officials said.

In addition, Phase II requires commanders to consider a number of quality-force factors when considering Airmen for retention. Those include correctional custody, referral reports, un-

favorable information files, Article 15 action, control roster restrictions, confinement, alcohol- or drug-related offenses, and financial irresponsibility or mismanagement.

Phase II widens the aperture on the Phase I initiatives, which netted almost 2,500 Airmen approved for retirement, separation or Palace Chase, said Maj. Gen. John M. Spiegel, director of personnel policy at the Pentagon.

"Phase II is the next step in our force-shaping program to move us closer to the authorized end strength of 359,700 while rebalancing the skills," he said.

"Phase I put us on a glide slope to reduce the size of the force without (worsening) manning shortages in the specialties," said Maj. Dawn Keasley, chief of retirement and separation policy at the Pentagon. "Phase II increases that momentum."

The initial goal of force shaping was to have 16,600 Airmen leave the Air Force, 3,900 officers and 13,700 enlisted. Those numbers are projected to increase to almost 19,000 by Sept. 30, and to 24,000 by Sept. 30, 2005, because of record retention rates.

"Incredibly high retention and a slow recovering economy are the primary factors in the increase of personnel overages," said Col. Mike Hayden, chief of the military policy division at the Pentagon. "Retention rates in the Air Force are at their highest in a decade."

General Spiegel said Phase I of the program met its objective.

"Phase I did exactly what it was supposed to do," the general said. "It allowed us to assess the level of interest and recalibrate for Phase II. Our goal is to do this drawdown as smartly while rebalancing the force and im-

proving manning in stressed career fields."

Phase II of the program is designed to do just that. For example, Phase I required individuals to have a minimum of 24 months on active duty before applying to Palace Chase. Phase II dropped the minimum requirement to 12 months. This modification expands the opportunity to another part of the population that might be interested in serving in the Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve, Major Keasley said.

Further, the active-duty service commitment following a permanent change of station in Phase I could be waived up to 18 months. Phase II allows for a full waiver of the commitment, officials said.

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**deployed in**  
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